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STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2005

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

Mr. Speaker, today marks a most auspicious day for the County of Maui, all of which I am most proud to represent in our Congress. The County of Maui, encompassing the four Islands of Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i and Kaho'olawe and their roughly 140,000 residents, was created one hundred years ago today. Tonight my colleagues and fellow citizens are gathering in the Maui County Building in Wailuku, onetime home of my great-grandparents, Daniel and Kathryn Case, to celebrate Proclamation Day and kick off a yearlong celebration of this milestone. As our business here keeps me from that ceremony, I have forwarded some remarks to be read there, and ask that those remarks and my best wishes for Maui County be inserted into the RECORD. Mahalo!

``HAPPY CENTENNIAL TO MAUI
COUNTY!"

Mr. Mayor, colleagues in public service, and fellow citizens, aloha!

And Happy Centennial, Maui County!

I so deeply appreciate the invitation to be your keynote speaker at this great event honoring the one hundredth anniversary to the day of the proclamation of the four great islands of Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i and Kaho'olawe as the county of Maui.

And I so equally regret that vital votes today in our nation's capitol make it impossible for me to come home in time to be with you personally.

But please know that I am very much with you in spirit on this great day, and that I truly look forward to joining you at other events in this centennial celebration year.

Of course, the roots of Maui County lie deep, back generations, centuries and millennia before its creation on April 14, 1905. It gave birth, with its sister counties, to the native Hawaiian people after the voyages from the south, and nurtured and sustained our indigenous culture through its refinement and time of greatest peril. In Post-contact times, it fostered the evolution of Hawaii's economy, through whaling and into sugar and pine, and the evolution of Hawaii's peoples, through in-migration from east and west.

But it is in the last century that this vital and unique part of our Hawaii has truly come into its own as the county of Maui. From not even 30,000 citizens in 1905, Maui county now is home to around 140,000 of us. From an agriculture-based economy, Maui county pioneered the modern tropical resort at Ká'anapali and later Wailea and Lanáí, the modern ecotourism movement, and a growing high-tech industry. From the great struggles and rebirth of Kaho'olawe to the Hawaiian language immersion schools of Moloka'i and Upcountry, Maui County led the modern-day renaissance of the Hawaiian people. And in our modern e-world, Maui County now boasts its own universally recognized brand domain: Maui.gov!

Yet the history of Maui County has always been about its people. From the indigenous Hawaiians, through the great waves of immigrants from Japan and Portugal, whose descendants--the Yoshinagas and Yokouchis, the Tavares and Cravalhos, and so many more--have been so intertwined with the county's progress, to the great migration from the Philippines, which commenced one hundred years ago next year, to the mainlanders and Canadians of recent decades who have made this their home, to our most recent citizens, the next generations from Mexico and Laos and the Marshall Islands: Maui County has always been the epitome of our Hawaiian melting pot, the place that could justly claim credit for having produced so many firsts such as Congresswoman Patsy Takemoto Mink and Governor Linda Lingle.

And each of us could and can lay claim in some way to our own Maui heritage. Take just two families who lived here one hundred years ago under quite different circumstances. One a Kansan and his wife who moved to Wailuku at the turn of the century--he was the first politician in the family when he ran successfully for Maui County attorney in 1905, then went on to be "the judge" for over two decades. And the other an immigrant family from Fukuoka, Japan who moved to Pu'unene, also at the turn of the century, to work in the sugar fields, before moving on a decade later to Kona Mauka on the big island. The first my great-grandparents, Daniel and Kathryn Case and the second my wife, Audrey's grandparents, Sentaro and Shina Hirata.

Centennials are about looking back, but they are as much about looking to the future, about tying what has been with what is and what can be. And as we look at where we are and where the road ahead lies, we can see clearly some of the paths and challenges we face, while some are more murky, and others cannot be seen at all.

But if and as we honor the past and recognize how we got here, we cannot but have confidence in our future. And for Maui County it always has been about people--about us. About how we treat and care for each other and for those beyond our shores, and about how together we care for our Aina.

Maui County's first hundred years have been good because we hewed to the course lit by these principles, and we pause today to say mahalo to all who came before us who deserve credit for guiding us to this point. But we also pause to recommit ourselves to what has made Maui County strong, because success doesn't just happen, and it is now our responsibility to see Maui County's second century off to a good and sustainable start.

I am truly proud and humbled to represent the very best of our Hawaii and country in our Congress at this watershed in Maui County's rich history, and again truly appreciate the opportunity to take this part in this great celebration. Happy birthday, Maui County, and best wishes for our new century. Aloha!